

1. For all a and b , let $a \clubsuit b = 3a + 2b + 1$. Compute c such that $(2c) \clubsuit (5 \clubsuit (c + 3)) = 60$.

Answer: $\frac{3}{2}$

Solution: Since

$$\begin{aligned} (2c) \clubsuit (5 \clubsuit (c + 3)) &= (2c) \clubsuit (3(5) + 2(c + 3) + 1) \\ &= (2c) \clubsuit (2c + 22) \\ &= 3(2c) + 2(2c + 22) + 1 \\ &= 10c + 45, \end{aligned}$$

we require $10c + 45 = 60$, so $c = \boxed{\frac{3}{2}}$.

2. Suppose that $(i - 1)^{11}$ is a root of the quadratic $x^2 + Ax + B$ for integers A and B , where $i = \sqrt{-1}$. Compute the value of $A + B$.

Answer: 1984

Solution: Recall $\text{cis}(\theta) = \cos \theta + i \sin \theta$. By Euler's formula,

$$(i - 1)^{11} = (\sqrt{2} \cdot \text{cis}(3\pi/4))^{11} = 2^{11/2} \cdot \text{cis}(\pi/4) = 32 + 32i.$$

Because A and B are real, it follows that $x^2 + Ax + B$ has roots $32 \pm 32i$ since the complex conjugate must also be a root. By Vieta's formulas, $A = -64$ and $B = 2048$, so $A + B = \boxed{1984}$.

3. Tej writes $2, 3, \dots, 101$ on a chalkboard. Every minute he erases two numbers from the board, x and y , and writes $xy/(x + y - 1)$. If Tej does this for 99 minutes until only one number remains, what is its maximum possible value?

Answer: $\frac{101}{100}$

Solution: Let the numbers at any given time be represented by $\{a_i\}$; for instance, initially, $a_1 = 2, a_2 = 3, \dots, a_{100} = 101$. For each i , let $b_i = (1 - a_i^{-1})^{-1}$. This yields $a_i = (1 - b_i^{-1})^{-1}$ and $a_j = (1 - b_j^{-1})^{-1}$ which imply

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{a_i a_j}{a_i + a_j - 1} &= \left(a_i^{-1} + a_j^{-1} - (a_i a_j)^{-1} \right)^{-1} \\ &= \left((1 - b_i^{-1}) + (1 - b_j^{-1}) - (1 - b_i^{-1})(1 - b_j^{-1}) \right)^{-1} \\ &= \left(1 - (b_i b_j)^{-1} \right)^{-1} \end{aligned}$$

In particular, $\prod b_i$ is invariant and Tej's final number is

$$\left(1 - \prod_i b_i^{-1} \right)^{-1} = \left(1 - \prod_i (1 - a_i^{-1}) \right)^{-1} = \left(1 - \prod_{i=1}^{100} \frac{i}{i+1} \right)^{-1} = \boxed{\frac{101}{100}}.$$